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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

REF: (A) STATE 128584 (B) STATE 107505

1. On August 16, the GON inaugurated the National Committee on the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Chaired by the Minister of Environment, the Committee is comprised of 10 ministries including Environment, Health, Transport, Commerce, Agriculture, Education and Water Resources. Each Ministry has been instructed to establish in-house technical committees to examine the Agenda 21 issues that fall in their purview. Four sub-committees have been established to oversee the work of the technical committees as follows:

-- Toxic Chemicals and Waste Management with technical committees on toxic chemicals; hazardous wastes; industry and environment; and solid waste management.

-- Implementation Strategies with technical committees on education, public awareness and training; and information and communication for decision-making.

-- Social and Economic Dimensions with technical committees on poverty; human settlements; health; trade and environment; and atmosphere.

-- Conservation of Natural Resources with technical committees on management of forests and other land resources; sustainable agriculture and rural development; conservation of biodiversity; coastal and marine resources; and water resources.

2. In a meeting September 12 with Assistant Director M.K. Ibrahim, Second United Nations Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EconOff learned that the GON had also established a fifth sub-committee examining the issue of good governance, particularly institutional mechanisms, rule of law, human rights and transparency/accountability. Ibrahim said the GON recognized that good governance would be a focus issue for many developed countries, adding that "nations cannot participate in today's world without good governance." When asked whether Nigeria would put forward its own agenda, Ibrahim commented that he expected the nations of the sub-region to reach a common approach at the sub-regional conference scheduled to take place October 1-3 in Abidjan.

3. Comment. Nigeria faces many challenges in achieving good governance as the country recovers from decades of military dictatorship and sore neglect of the nation's institutions and infrastructure. The judiciary is widely considered to be corrupt and incapable of efficiently processing claims. There is insufficient capacity to enforce national laws and regulations, which sometimes contradict each other and are often not harmonized (e.g., environmental protection legislation) may conflict with each other. The physical infrastructure of the country has deteriorated -- power and water supplies are far below demand and telephones reach only 2 percent of the population. Public tendering, while seemingly transparent at the onset, typically concludes in a cloud of obscurity. The political will exists to tackle some of these problems, such as legal harmonization and some infrastructure improvements, but political realities on the ground make significant changes to the political-economic status quo unlikely in the short term.

4. Comment Continued. There are no specific host country sensitivities to good governance; most Nigerians acknowledge (and lament) that the country lacks critical institutional capacity and suffers from endemic corruption. Mission officers frequently raise issues of good governance with the GON. However, GON officials believe they are making progress on these problems, and, in some areas, they are. Therefore, in discussions with Nigeria on the WSSD, the Department

should recognize the Obasanjo Administration's efforts to improve governance.

15. Comment Continued. Host country priorities relative to good governance are to reduce low-level corruption, improve internal security through reform of the national police and improve the investment climate. Through the IMF Stand-by Arrangement, the GON has also made progress on identifying redundant civil servants and auditing GON capital projects. There has been little emphasis, however, on reforming the judiciary or rooting out higher-level corruption.

16. Comment Continued. Through USAID, the USG is providing Nigeria with over \$100 million in FY01 in programs that contribute directly or indirectly to improved governance. These areas include health, education, conflict mitigation, law enforcement, privatization, fiscal and monetary policy, intellectual property rights, trade and tariff policy and economic policy coordination.
Andrews